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# TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

## ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON,

SESSION 1861-2.

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NOVEMBER 19TH, 1861.

JOHN CRAWFURD, Esq., President, in the Chair.

THE Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following presents were announced, and the thanks of the Society ordered to be returned to their respective donors.

Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.—Annual Report of Smithsonian Institution.—Journal of Statistical Society (presented by the Society).—Reports of British Association for the years 1858, 1859, 1860 (the Association).—Second Geological Survey of Arkansas.—De la Génération Spontanée. M. Boucher de Perthes (the Author).—Nègre et Blanc. M. Boucher de Perthes (Ditto).—Bulletins de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris (the Society).—Bulletin of the American Ethnological Society (Ditto).—Journal of the Asiatic Society.—Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, vol. xii.—The Warings and Waringhians. By H. Clarke, Esq.—Mittheilungen der Kaiserlich Königlich Geographischen Gesellschaft.—Proceedings of the Literary Society of Liverpool (the Society).—Transactions of the Academy of Science of St. Louis (Ditto).—Transactions of the Philological Society (Ditto).—The Athenæum (the Editor).—The Photographic Journal (Ditto).

The following new Fellows were announced :—

Sir J. F. Davies, Bart.  
John Dickinson, Jun., Esq.  
C. H. Fox, Esq., M.D.  
Capt. Douglas Galton, F.R.S.  
Edmund Lloyd, Esq., F.R.C.S.  
Arthur Paget, Esq.

Sir T. Erskine Perry.  
H. C. Rowcroft, Esq., Bengal Engineers.  
Humfrey Sandwith, Esq., C.B.  
Saml. Reynolds Solly, Esq., F.R.S.  
G. W. Spence, Esq., M.D.

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I.—*Abstract of a Report of the Ethnological Papers read at the Manchester Meeting of the British Association in September 1861.* By JAMES HUNT, Secretary to Section E, and Honorary Secretary of the Ethnological Society.

DR. HUNT said it was his pleasing duty to report to the Society that at the meeting of the British Association at Manchester, the interest taken by the public in the science of Ethnology was

as great as that shown at the previous meeting at Oxford. It will also be gratifying to the Fellows of this Society to learn, that to their President, Mr. Crawford, was entrusted the honour of presiding over the Section. The people of Manchester did all in their power to provide suitable and convenient accommodation for the members; and Section E was especially well provided for in the large lecture-hall at the Mechanics' Institute. Nothing was wanting to make this meeting the most successful for Ethnology, but some good papers. As a faithful reporter, he was bound to state, that in this respect there was a very great deficiency. Altogether there were twenty-five papers read before the Section. Many of them, he thought, were foreign to both ethnology and geography, and consisted of questions of railroads, telegraphs, ship-canal, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and the formation of icebergs. Some of them, especially the geographical, had been previously read in London.

Dr. Hunt expressed a hope that at the next meeting of the British Association at Cambridge, the Fellows of this Society would attend in larger numbers; and that they should, in the mean time, use their best energies to induce both travellers and thinkers to send contributions which should be worthy of the science of Ethnology. Dr. Hunt then gave an account of the various papers read before the Association, many of which would during the Session be read before the Society, and printed at length. The following is an—

*Abstract of a Paper entitled 'Remarks on the English Gypsies and their Dialect,' (read at the Meeting of the British Association, Sept. 7th, 1861.)* By BATH C. SMART, F.E.S.

This Paper professed to be simply a contribution to our particular knowledge of the *English Gypsies*, and the existing state of their language, and made no pretensions to deal with the wider question of the history, origin and affinities of the gypsy race.

The writer commenced with a brief sketch of the physical characteristics of the English Gypsies, and to the common observation of their swarthy skin, dark bushy hair, black piercing eyes, etc.; he added, as noteworthy features in the gypsy physiognomy, the prevalence amongst the tribe of a well-developed aquiline nose, and the oblique setting of the orbital arches, which slope upwards towards the root of the nose, forming together but one common arch, instead of segments of two separate circles. After a passing glance at their physiological and psychical peculiarities, he proceeded to the more especial subject of his paper, viz., the actual condition, at the present day, of the English dialect of the gypsy. His remarks on this point were based on a vocabulary of

eight hundred words, recently collected by himself among various gypsy families in different parts of the country. Hitherto, the English gypsies had been rather neglected in this respect: the first English vocabulary, the small one of Bryant's, was communicated to the Society of Antiquaries in 1785, and is to be found in the seventh volume of the *Archæologia*, but its value is impaired by many obvious blunders. A very accurate list of words, but more limited than it at first sight appears on account of its numerous repetitions, is that of Colonel Harriot, published in 1830 in the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*; these, together with scattered references to the English dialect in Mr. Borrow's writings on the gypsies, representing all the original investigations deserving mention that have been undertaken in this country.

The writer of the paper explained, as far as he was able, the principles of composition observed in the formation of the more complex gypsy words, and especially the use of the terminations 'mengro', 'escro', and 'pen'. The common employment of punning appellatives was shown by various instances, *e. g.* Redford (town of that name) is construed by 'Lalopecro', literally, 'red foot'. The frequent interchange of the consonants (mutes and liquids) was demonstrated by numerous examples, accounting for discrepancies in the orthography of different collectors.

The writer then passed to the consideration of the grammar, and pointed out the traces of inflexions still to be found in the several parts of speech. Specimens were given of the distinction of gender, of case-endings in nouns and pronouns, of the formation of the plural, and of the degrees of comparison, and also of the remnants of the ancient mode of conjugating the verb, which have been retained in some of their common phrases. Lastly, a list of prepositions was given, with their corresponding Hindustani post-positions. Of the syntax it was remarked, that with but few exceptions, the sentences were arranged in strict accordance with the idiom of the English language. The writer concluded by referring to the urgent necessity that existed for collecting, without more delay, a complete vocabulary of the English-Gypsy dialect, as, from various specified causes, it is fast degenerating and dying out.

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A vote of thanks to Dr. Hunt for his report was proposed by the President, and carried unanimously.

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